The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and authentic interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and presents labor information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1625 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 1942 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 32, NO. 22

Melvyn Douglas And Green To Star On "Labor For Victory" June 13

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor and the United States Treasury Department will jointly sponsor the next AFL "Labor For Victory" radio broadcast over the NBC network on June 13.

Melvyn Douglas, the screen star, who was prevented from appearing on the May 30 AFL program because he missed a plane connection, will act as master of ceremonies on the June 13 show.

President William Green and other labor officials will reveal in the broadcast how the unions of the AFL are living up to the Government's War Bond Campaign.

Make sure to listen in over your local outlet of the NBC network at 10:15 P.M., Eastern War Time!

Roosevelt Asks $600,000,000 More To House War Industries Workers

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt asked Congress to authorize an additional $600,000,000 for emergency housing "to meet the minimum needs of the 1,900,000 workers migrating to war centers."

The authorization would be added to Lanham Act funds. Under the Lanham Act program the Washington area has received an additional allocation. Housing officials said they did not believe the Washington area would share in the new authorization request, since Congress has required special legislation for Capital needs.

"More than ever before in our history," the President told the Congress in a special message, "we need houses to help win the war.

"Industry cannot effectively mobilize and plants cannot expand with sufficient rapidity unless there are enough houses to bring the worker to the job, keep him on the job and maintain his efficiency and morale."

Biddle Orders Bridges Deported

Washington, D. C.—Deportation of Harry R. Bridges, West Coast CIO leader, to his native Australia was ordered by Attorney General Biddle.

The Attorney General's opinion reversing the Board of Immigration Appeals, which had canceled deportation proceedings on January 2, was based on two major conclusions of fact, one that the Communist party advocates overthrow by force and violence of the United States Government, and that Bridges was a member of such an organization.

The Attorney General upheld the proposed findings of Charles B. Sears, retired judge of the New York Court of Appeals, who presided at a 10-week hearing in San Francisco last year.

Bridges presumably will be released under bond pending an anticipated appeal through the courts.

Mr. Biddle said his ruling could be taken to the Federal District Courts, the Circuit Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

Mr. Biddle found that Bridges, since his entry into the United States, had been a member of the Communist party, that he had been affiliated with the Marine Workers' Industrial Union, an organization controlled by the Communist party, and that the Communist party, an organization that advocated the overthrow of the Government by force and violence.

The Bridges deportation case, now in its sixth year, has been the most bitterly fought proceeding in the history of the Immigration and Naturalization service.

On two occasions, once by a vote of 230 to 42 and again unanimously, the House voted to deport Bridges, but both bills died in Senate committee.

Bridges heads the CIO longshoremen's union on the West Coast.

BAKERY UNIONS PURCHASE $1,253,433 OF WAR BONDS

Washington, D. C.—Herman Winter, International Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers International Union of America, informed AFL President William Green that $235,079 of war bonds and stamps had been purchased by local unions and $888,354.15 by union members. In addition, Mr. Winter said the International Union has purchased $100,000 defense bonds and $50,000 savings stamps, making a grand total of $1,253,433.15 for the International Union, local unions and union members.

STRIKE BREAKER FINED BY COURT

New York City.—Pearl L. Bergoff, 68 years old, who for thirty-five years conducted one of the most extensive strike-breaking organizations in the country, was fined $500 in Special Sessions. He paid it to avoid serving a thirty-day workhouse term on his recent conviction of operating a private detective agency without a state license to furnish strike-breakers and guards. His license had been revoked in 1936 because of irregularities.

Justices Hofmann and Kozicke voted the fine, while Justice Wieboldt voted for a flat six-month term. The three justices also imposed an additional one-year penitentiary term on Bergoff, but suspended its execution.

They ordered fines of $100 each or thirty days in the workhouse for Bergoff's brother, Leo, 62, and Bernard Haas, 61, holder of the license for the Modern Investigating Bureau, 1854 Broadway, through which Bergoff conducted the strike-breaking. The justices also fined the bureau $500 but suspended sentences on Lew Cohen and Edward Graff, who had pleaded guilty and testified for the prosecution.

Labor Angered By McNutt Ruling "Freezing" Workers In War Jobs

New "Work or Fight" Order Also Arouses Widespread Criticism

Washington, D. C.—A storm of criticism is brewing in trade union circles against arbitrary and confusing rulings by the War Manpower Commission and other Federal agencies issued without prior consultation of organized labor.

Protests were most bitter against a sudden announcement by a "spokesman" for the War Manpower Commission that essential workers will be "frozen" in their present jobs in war industries for the duration to stop "labor pirating" by industrial firms.

The very next day Paul V. McNutt, Chairman of the Commission, modified the "spokesman's" statement. He said:

"No restrictions will be placed upon the freedom of a worker to work where he chooses except that he will be expected to secure any new job requiring a critical skill through the United States Employment Service or in accordance with methods approved by it."

However, Mr. McNutt at the same time announced that "Work or Fight" will be the policy of the Manpower Commission. This will apply, he said, to workers who refuse to accept "suitable employment in a war industry without reasonable cause."

Pressure will be brought to bear both on employers and employes to stop pirating of workers in essential war industries, he clearly indicated.

If employers "pirating" essential workers from each other they will be reported to the War Production Board, the Maritime Commission and the War and Navy Departments, the sources of war contracts and priority rulings, for "appropriate action."

If workers refuse to stay put in their present jobs or fail to shift jobs at the direction of the United States Employment Service, they will be reported to the Selective Service System "for consideration in connection with any request for deferment on occupational grounds."

The latter ruling is equivalent to saying that if a worker doesn't submit to complete regimentation, he will be drafted for armed service.

Mr. McNutt hastened to remark that this "pressure" from the Government wouldn't affect the right to strike, but his assurance appeared empty and meaningless.

He also stated that in each industrial region designated as a critical area a local committee of labor and management representatives would be established to advise here and make recommendations on appeals by either workers or employers.

There will always be some cases, he pointed out, where the Government will feel that a worker was justified in changing jobs or the employer was entitled to hire him.

The Pageant of American Labor

Here is a labor of love—the story of American workers written by a master whose heart is with them. Hollywood's scoopla pay Ben Hecht tremendous sums for movie scripts. He did this job for no other compensation than that which comes to the artist when he expresses his profound convictions.

This dramatization was broadcast over the American Federation of Labor's radio program, "Labor For Victory," on May 30 over a nation-wide NBC network. But, because of time limitations, some of the material below was omitted.

Every American should read it!

By BEN HECHT

History talks with a thousand tongues.

History is an echo that lingers over the places where armies met, where statesmen gabbled, where ideas bumped heads.

A cat with its tail caught in the door makes the same kind of noise as most of history. A hungry chicken coop sounds like the long sag doings of Kings and Captains.

The fife and drum corps echoes of history tell of many things that have happened—of throbs and confidences, of banners that fluttered high for an hour, of geniuses that measured the earth and weighed the stars and found a name for mysteries.

But listen hard as you will to all the echoes and you'll hear no sound of a forge; you'll hear no ringing of a hammer, no echo of the grunt of men lifting stones, shaping wood, and swinging picks at the earth. This silence is the history of Labor. The history of Labor is an epic of silence.

It is this silence that is being broken in our day. A new tongue is being added to history—the Voice of Labor.

The poets are still a little backward in lending it their words. And its deeds are not yet on the blackboards in classrooms.

This is because the Voice of Labor is still too strong for the poetry and the text book makers. It says a thing that has frightened most of the watchmen in the ivory towers. The Voice of Labor says:

"We are History; and History is the tale of men. None of their names in the history books. They are the ancient immemorial sons of toil—as anonymous as the blades of grass.

This night is a special occasion. A delegation has arrived from the City of New York. It is a delegation from New York's committee of mechanics. Its spokesman, name unknown, speaks for it:

WAGON WORKER

I be not a speaker who can tell ye fancy matters. We have heard from the workers of New York and Boston and from the sailors in all our harbors and from every foundry and stable and mill in this part of the land. What we have heard has always been of a similar nature. We have heard that there's not a good workman in the land who isn't ready to help with hammer or musket. So I say to you, in behalf of the wagon makers of which I am one—I say to you it's a good cause we're in, despite the cries of the gentry against it. For a cause that has workmen behind it is an honest cause for all and not a crackpot adventure for a few. I ask you men to take a vote here and now—are you ready to die for the cause of a nation whose first law will be freedom for all?

NARRATOR

Out of a thousand of these meetings working men in the towns and villages of the Colonies our nation was born. These pioneer laborers worked with no thought of glory for themselves but with a dream for all. Suddenly before the noisy and bedeviled politicians of 1776, Samuel Adams, Colonial patriot, spoke of them:

SAMUEL ADAMS

There is much dissension, gentlemen, among those of us who are seeking to guide the destiny of the republic which is being born. But there is no dissension among those whose vigor and travail are giving it birth. I speak of our workers in the foundries, shipyards, mills and forests. Among them you will find no Tories, no question-askers, no faint hearts. Let them be our example of patriotism—for there is not a workman however lowly or underpaid, who does not stand ready to die for our cause of Liberty.

NARRATOR

Some ninety years later in the summer of 1861, another meeting of trade union workers assembled to discuss shop problems.

Almost a century had passed yet there was no change in the Voice of Labor that will speak this night—that will leap to the platform and sound again the cry of the workers behind the scenes of History.

This is Bill Sylvis who will talk. Bill is a member of the new union ranks of labor.

SYLVIS

I say we're wasting time talking about our shops and our shop problems. There's something that's threatening more than our shops. There's something threatening our country. That's what we have to discuss tonight. Armed treason and rebellion threaten our institutions.

And I say that we who are the toiling millions must stand like a wall between our country and all its foes. Fellow workers, do we talk shop tonight—or do we talk Liberty and Freedom?

NARRATOR

The union that Bill Sylvis addressed this night voted to adjourn for the duration of the Civil War. Its members enrolled in the army in a body. In less than six months working men formed the core of the northern forces.

Not entirely unbalanced and drunken was the spirit of these workers, though the records of the time show that more calumny than praise was heaped on them.

For in this time when the nation was split with Civil War there was already another war looming within—the war of those who dreamed of reaping all the rewards of freedom for themselves, and leaving a hand-out and a hovel for the men and women who were wrestling behind the scenes of History.

But there was one who had come up from the hand-out and the hovel and whose heart remembered them, and whose brain envisioned his country—as their land. This was Abraham Lincoln.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

All that serves labor serves the nation. All that harms labor is treason. No line can be drawn between these two. If any man tells you he loves his country, but hates labor, he is a liar. If any man tells you he trusts his country, yet fears labor, he is a fool. There is no country without labor, and to fleece the one is to rob the other.

NARRATOR

The enemy retired vanquished from the gates of the republic. And labor went back to its twelve hour day and to piling up mountains of gold for an adventurous few.

Hundreds of thousands of working men pulling down a dollar and a half a day built the great monopolistic empires of the Iron Horse—and took a hand-out and a hovel for their share.

But they did something more than pile up gold for corporations. They built something beyond the reach of stockholders. They built a nation. The dollar-fifty a day was only a tiny down payment for their toil. They took the rest in Freedom and Liberty. That the U.S.A. has always been the real coin of the realm for the working man. Listen to them again—the millions behind the scenes of History, discussing again the value of their treasure. The time is March 12, 1917, a month before the U. S. entered the First World War. From a platform at a special conference called by the American Federation of Labor, Samuel Gompers, father of the Labor movement, recites a declaration just adopted.

MR. GOMPERS

We speak for millions of Americans. We are not a sect. We are not a party. We represent the organization of labor together by the pressure of our common need. We represent a part of the nation closest to the fundamentals of life. These we represent with the nation's tools and grapple with the forces that are brought under control in our material-civilization. The power and use of industrial tools is greater than the tools of war and will in time supersede the agencies of destruction. We hereby pledge ourselves, in peace or in war—in stress or in storm—to stand unreservedly by the standard of Liberty and the safety and preservation of our republic's ideals.

We offer our services to our country in every field of activity to defend, safeguard, and preserve the republic of the United States against its enemies, and we call upon our fellow workers in the holy name of Labor, Justice, Freedom and Humanity, to give like service.

NARRATOR

And from the White House where the long-faced, long-visioned prexy of the nation sat guiding the republic, came a cry of gratitude to the workers—a cry that rose above the partisan antagonistic machinations of the day. It is 1918 and President Woodrow Wilson speaks to the American Federation of Labor.

PRESIDENT WILSON

I desire to convey to this thirty-eighth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor my congratulations on the patriotic support which its members have been giving to the war program of the nation in the past year, support given not only in the trenches and on the battlefields, but equally in the factories, shipyards and workshops of the country, where the army is supported and supplied by the loyal industry of skilled craftsmen. In these days of trial and self-sacrifice the American working man is bearing his share of the national burden nobly. In the new world of peace and freedom which America is fighting to establish, his place will be as honored as his service today is esteemed.

NARRATOR

But all these things that happened since the first meeting in the little Philadelphia hall—all that had gone into the history books, were only a curtain raiser—a tooting of preliminary horns.

The big battle was yet to come. The battle between the powers that said, "No strength shall rule but the strength of Liberty and Freedom for all."

This main event began to climb into the ring around 1933.

And here are the descendants of the workers in the Philadelphia meeting hall, speaking in the unchanging Voice of Labor.

The time is 1933. The American Federation of Labor is gathered in its annual convention. Its president, Mr. William Green, makes an address.

MR. GREEN

This tyrants of German made goods and German services will continue until the German government recognizes the right of the working people of Germany to organize into independent trade unions of their own choosing, and until Germany ceases its repressive policy and persecution of the Jewish people.

NARRATOR

A year passes. Changes are sweeping the world. Isms are convulsing the thinkers, but the Voice of Labor speaks unchanged.

It is 1934. A delegate reads the committee report adopted by the American Federation of Labor that year.

DELEGATE

We charge the Hitler government with seeking to destroy religious standards sacred to men of all creeds; with promoting a militarist ideal which endangers the peace of the world; with enslaving thousands of men and women whose greatest crime is a devotion to liberty.

We pledge to direct our heaviest guns on all those Fascist and Nazi agencies that are trying to poison the minds of the people of the United States against labor or against any religious group.

NARRATOR

And in 1937 that unchanging Voice sounds again at the American Federation of Labor convention.

DELEGATE

We hereby call upon the people of the United States and of all free nations to condemn the outrageous acts of Japan and to denounce its militarist and conscienceless policies. We recommend that the United States government prohibit its citizens from selling war material or lending money to Japan until that nation has ceased its barbaric methods to conquest.

NARRATOR

And then the gong sounded around the world and the main event went on. And here again labor speaks. The time is 1940.

DELEGATE

The American Federation of Labor has adopted the following declaration: We favor the extension of all help possible to Great Britain in her hour of need. We must face our profound duty and produce, produce, and produce as never before in order that our friends may win the battle for democracy. We know if Britain wins, we win.

NARRATOR

Other voices were faltering. Cries, questions, doubts, fears and treasons swept like tornadoes. But in all the scurry of 1941, through all its confusion and despair, the Voice of Labor was heard as clearly as it had in Philadelphia a century and a half ago. Mr. Green speaks—

MR. GREEN

We of the American Federation of Labor are going to rise to new heights. We are going to advise the President of the United States that we will stand all we have in support of his program, that we will stand by him, and behind him, and all around him.

We will tell him further that if it is necessary to take more decisive action in order to maintain freedom of the seas and to protect democracy throughout the world, we will stand by him and follow to the bitter end.

NARRATOR

It's on now—the main event, the two powers born of the brain of man are fighting it out—to a once and for all finish.

We're all in it.

There's plenty of room for everybody in this fight for the destiny of the human soul. And from the peak of Maine to the last palm of California, up and down and across the middle, we're all whooping toward Armageddon—throwing our gold, our muscle, our brains and our blood into the great world-wide ring.

And where is Labor?

It is where it's always been—behind and in front and in the midst of every battle that was ever fought for liberty and freedom. Here are some of its voices today.

WORKMAN

I'm on the assembly line in a war production plant. We're turning out airplanes. We're turning them out faster every day. No strikes. No squawks, and we'll never stop working till we win.

ANOTHER WORKMAN

I was a union mechanic working on Wake Island. I was working in the shop when those buck-toothed Japs landed.

When they started slanting their fire I dropped my tools and joined the marines—with a gun. Eleven hundred of my union pals fought beside 'em till there were ten Japs for every one of us. They licked us—for a minute—Wait for the next round.

SAILOR

I'm a sailor on an American ship. A lot of my buddies have been sunk by submarines, but I can tell you the Heinies are wasting their time. Because we'll build 'em faster than they can sink 'em on the ocean. We'll keep on bringing up guns, tanks, soldiers and airplanes until we make the world a fit place for a guy to work in.

CARPENTER

I am hammering up things in Hawaii and I got pals in Alaska, Panama, and lots of funny places—all hammering up things. It's a good job and it pays me more than wages. It pays off in hammering nails in a coffin for the enemies of the U.S.A.

NARRATOR

When History speaks tomorrow there will be less confusion in its trumpet-tone.

History tomorrow will sound less like a cat with its tail caught in a door and less like a hungry chicken-coop.

A new voice has been added to the fife and drum corps echoes of History.

This is the Voice of Labor.

This voice will speak not of conquests or adventures. It will relate that the war to decide the destiny of man was won by many things—valor and skill and money.

And it will relate that high among them was Labor. It will relate that in a year of material versus material, of Production versus Production—Free Workers outworked and outproduced the enslaved labor of the Dictatorships.

It will reveal for the world what Labor has always known in its long silence—that the dream of Liberty in the heart of Workers is a greater goad than the whips of Tyrants on their backs.

This statement and the proof of it will be in the history of tomorrow.

It was the statement that began our nation in the little labor hall of Philadelphia.

And it is a statement that will continue our nation triumphant and—with God's will—forever beyond the reach of enemies.

Credit Where Credit Is Due!

New York City.—Our hats are off to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union!

This organization made a major contribution to the cause of organized labor when it initiated, produced and financed "The Pageant of American Labor," which was broadcast May 30 on the AFL "Labor For Victory" program over the National Broadcasting Company.

Yet for all its efforts, the I.L.G.W.U. did not get a word of credit.

A full acknowledgement of the union's part in producing this program had been prepared in advance, but at the last moment, when it became clear that the script would have to be cut to get within the allotted time, the union agreed to axe these credits so as to preserve the story.

That's the sort of self-sacrifice that counts!

So, to keep the record straight and to give credit where it is due, the American Federation of Labor hereby expresses its appreciation to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. We especially wish to thank David Dubinsky, president of the I.L.G.W.U., for making the show possible, and Louis Schaffer, supervisor of the union's Cultural Division, for his untiring efforts to make it a success.

R. R. LABOR HITS WAGE FREEZING

Washington, D. C.—Meeting in Washington, the members of the Railway Labor Executives' Association unanimously assailed "wage freezing." Their statement said:

"In his recent message to Congress dealing with stabilization, the President set forth a seven-point program calling, in part, for the stabilization of wage earners' incomes, but making it clear he did not favor a general wage freezing program.

"However, more recent messages addressed to the public press by some of the President's swivel chair generals, indicate that they may be more in sympathy with the view of low-wage employers than with those expressed by their Commander-in-Chief.

"Organized railway labor is determined to win this war, but we are equally determined that in doing so we will not lose the very democracy that we are fighting to save. We cannot defeat Hitlerism by adopting it, and, therefore, organized railway labor is unqualifiedly opposed to any program of wage freezing, and we will resist it vigorously.

"Those in private industry and in public office who have notoriously antisocial records standing back over a long period of years, are now wrapped in the American flag and crying out generally for anti-strike and wage freezing orders, and other schemes for labor suppression.

"What they so fervently desired and so feverishly worked for, but failed to accomplish during normal peace times, they are now seeking to bring about under the pretense that it is patriotic necessity during the present national emergency.

"Let the American people take note of the fact that when this war is won, it will be in spite of and not because of these disciples of disunity.

"Any arbitrary freezing of wages, without careful regard for the well-known fact that many wage scales are now substandard, would simply mean freezing of American and unhealthful standards of living for millions of our people."

40 CENTS HOURLY MINIMUM FIXED FOR TEXTILE LABOR

Washington, D. C.—Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins announced that effective June 24, 1942, 40 cents an hour or $16 a week is the minimum wage under the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act for commodities coming within the definition of the Textile Industry. This minimum takes the place of the 37½ cents minimum established under the Public Contracts Act in 1941.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act the minimum for the Textile Industry was set at 40 cents an hour on April 26, 1942. The action of the Secretary establishes 40 cents an hour or $16 a week as the minimum under both acts and adopts a common definition for the Textile Industry.